AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please retain Claims 29, 30 and 32 as previously presented and cancel Claims 31 and 33 without prejudice or disclaimer.

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Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-28 (Previously cancelled).

Claim 29 (Previously presented): A method of playing a slot machine game using a symbol
10 matrix formed by a plurality of rows intersecting with a plurality of columns, with the plurality of rows and columns including a plurality of symbols, comprising:

  a)   a player making a wager to play the game;

  b)   randomly rearranging the plurality of symbols;

  c)   displaying the rearranged symbols in the symbol matrix;

15 d)   automatically expanding wildcard symbols, if displayed in the symbol matrix, in all of the predetermined directions assigned by the directional indicia displayed on each said wildcard symbol;

  e)   always replacing the symbol(s) in the path of an expanding wildcard symbol with the expanding wildcard symbol; and

20 f)   issuing awards for winning symbol combinations following the expansion of all wildcard symbols.

Claim 30 (Previously presented): The method of Claim 29 in which the directional indicia for a

wildcard symbol assigns one or more of the following predetermined directions:

a)   upwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;

b)   downwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;

c)   leftwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears;

5   d)   rightwards from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears; or

e)   diagonally from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears.

Claim 31 (Cancelled): ~~The method of Claim 29 in which a wildcard symbol expands N symbol~~

~~positions, from the symbol position in which the wildcard symbol appears towards the~~

10   ~~predetermined direction(s) assigned by the directional indicia displayed on the wildcard symbol,~~

~~with N indicated on the wildcard symbol and with N calculated in one of the following manners:~~

~~a)   N is a fixed number;~~

~~b)   N is a random number; or~~

~~c)   N is a random number selected from a range of numbers.~~

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Claim 32 (Previously presented): The method of Claim 29 in which letters or words are used as

directional indicia displayed on the wildcard symbols.

Claim 33 (Cancelled): ~~The method of Claim 29 in which arrows are used as directional indicia~~

20   ~~displayed on the wildcard symbols.~~